

# EQIP WaterSMART Initiative (WSI)

## FY2020 Progress Report

Managing water resources in the American West can be challenging. Drought, aging infrastructure, and environmental requirements can strain existing resources. Adequate water supplies are fundamental to healthy communities and agricultural landscapes.

### NRCS and WaterSMART

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program-WaterSMART Initiative (EQIP-WSI) is a collaborative effort between NRCS and the U.S. Department of Interior's (DOI) Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). Through EQIP-WSI, the agencies coordinate investments in the western U.S. to conserve water and become more resilient to drought impacts.

DOI's WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) Program is a framework that provides leadership and assistance to help water resource managers stretch and secure water supplies for future generations.

Through WaterSMART, Reclamation leverages Federal and non-Federal funding to support states, tribes, and local entities as they work to increase water supply reliability through investments in existing infrastructure and attention to local water conflicts.

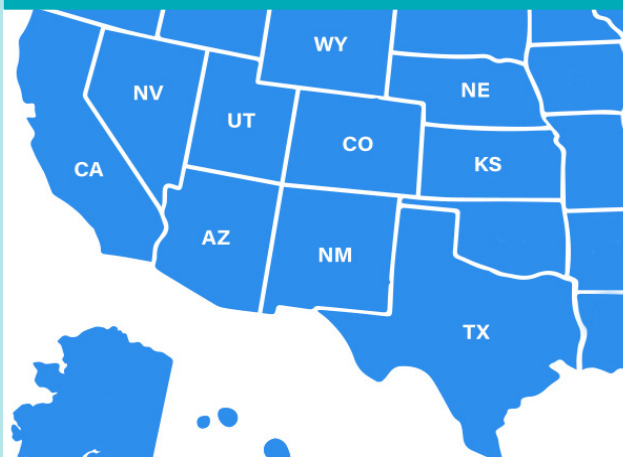
NRCS complements these Reclamation investments by using the EQIP-WSI to target EQIP funds to help farmers and ranchers improve their operations in a way that aligns with a specific WaterSMART funded project. Focusing improvements in the same area aims to increase water conservation and resilience to drought.

Depending on local conditions, some water conservation improvements may also improve soil health; reduce soil erosion, sediment, nutrient, and pathogen losses; protect crop health and productivity; and make using equipment, facilities, and agricultural operations more efficient.

### NRCS Focus Areas

The EQIP-WSI plays an important role in the National Drought Resilience Partnership because coordination between NRCS and Reclamation helps communities better prepare for future droughts and reduce the impact of drought events on livelihoods and the economy than independently delivered assistance.

The ten states with EQIP-WSI projects



### Outcomes and Impacts

#### The effort began in 2011 with a pilot in California.

With the success of the pilot effort, multi-state coordination began in 2016. Between 2016 and 2020, NRCS and Reclamation coordinated to fund complementary investments in 10 different states. The agencies work together to document and publicize the successes of their collaborative results and coordinated efforts.

Beginning in 2020, NRCS has refocused on outcomes, acknowledging that each priority area could have its own unique goals. EQIP-WSI activities in the targeted priority area are now planned and implemented over a multi-year project period to achieve specific goals.

Precision nutrient application conserves water and places necessary plant nutrients where and when needed.



Fiscal Year 2020 EQIP - WSI  
Financial Assistance for Active and Completed Contracts

State	Acres	NRCS Investment	Contracts
Arizona	1,383	\$ 561,281	5
California	528	\$ 630,928	7
Colorado	38	\$ 88,797	2
Idaho	2,000	\$ 8,521,955	26
Kansas	109	\$ 86,853	2
Nebraska	1,302	\$ 136,218	2
New Mexico	4,373	\$ 2,677,310	26
Texas	2,199	\$ 886,643	16
Utah	1,020	\$ 1,334,883	24
Wyoming	112	\$ 177,590	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,064</b>	<b>\$ 15,102,458</b>	<b>112</b>

### NRCS Goals

The Starting in 2020, NRCS launched the EQIP-WSI project model to include these defining factors and goals:

- Priority water resource concerns and practices
- Project implementation goals for
  - Number of contracts
  - Acres treated
- Metrics to monitor progress and evaluate final collaborative conservation outcomes in the project area

### Accomplishments

31 EQIP-WSI priority area projects were selected from 40 proposals for implementation and funding in FY2021. All proposals were evaluated for their ability to complement the activities of a specific Reclamation WaterSMART project and to accelerate cumulative water savings or related drought resilience benefits.

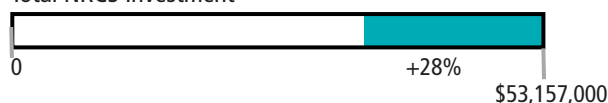
Six general types of activities in the Reclamation WaterSMART projects will be complemented by EQIP-WSI activities: water delivery automation and monitoring; canal lining or replacement with pipe; other infrastructure modernization; drought response; stream restoration; and watershed restoration.

The most common agricultural conservation practices supported through EQIP-WSI funding in FY2020 to complement Reclamation's investments include irrigation water conveyance, structures for water control, sprinkler irrigation systems, irrigation water management, and cover crops.

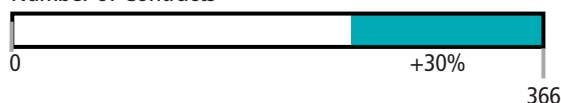
### Summary of NRCS Assistance Obligated FY 2016 - 2020

FY16-19  
 FY20

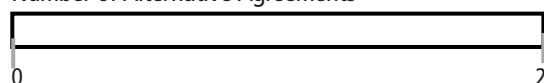
#### Total NRCS Investment



#### Number of Contracts



#### Number of Alternative Agreements



#### Total Acres Contracted with Producers



### Success Stories

Several example success stories published over the last five years illustrate the benefits of coordinating water delivery projects funded by Reclamation with irrigation water use efficiency projects funded by NRCS in the same local communities.

The Gila River Indian Community in Arizona, the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry in New Mexico, and agricultural producers supplied water by the Newton Water Users Association in Utah all used EQIP-WSI funds to improve irrigation water use efficiency on irrigated cropland by reducing spills, leaks, and evaporation losses, and conserving water for use during extended periods of drought.